town and country church

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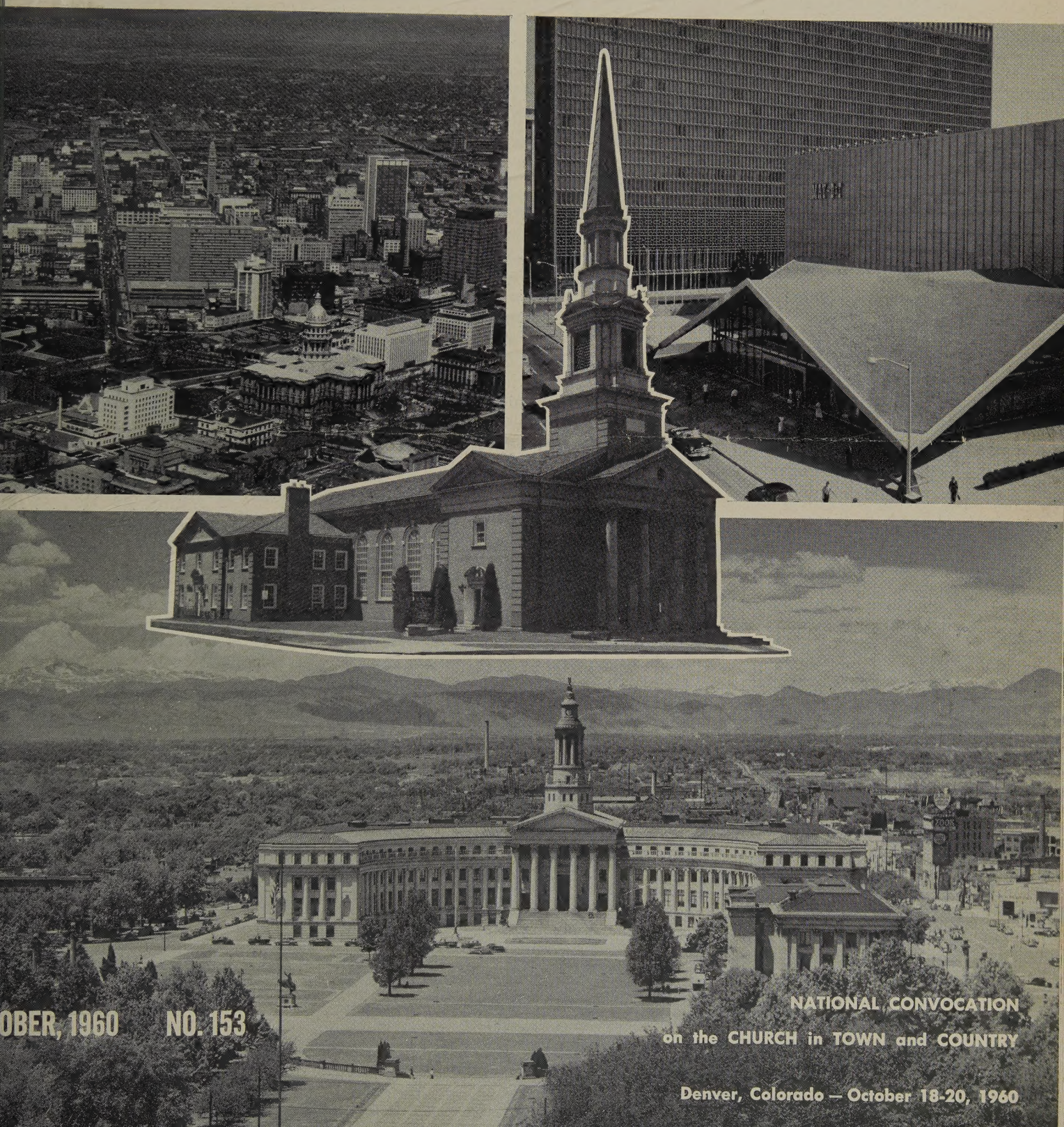

OBER, 1960 NO. 153

NATIONAL CONVOCATION
on the CHURCH in TOWN and COUNTRY

Denver, Colorado — October 18-20, 1960

town and country church

Purposes: To encourage cooperation among rural churches • to improve local church administration in organization, finance, education, community relations, and lay leadership training • to help develop a Christian philosophy of rural life embracing ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government

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Cover

Cover Photographs of Denver, Colorado, courtesy of the Denver Chamber of Commerce and the Denver Area Council of Churches.

In this issue . . .

• On the cover of this issue is a picture of the First Baptist Church of Denver, Colorado and several photos of the "mile high city." Here the National Convocation of the Church in Town and Country will be held October 18-20.

The four middle pages of this magazine comprise the program. Additional copies of this issue will be distributed to registrants at the Convocation.

A biographical sketch of the Rev. William Davidson, Chairman of the Program Committee of the National Convocation is found in the column "So You May Know."

In order to acquaint our newer registrants with the background of these annual meetings, Dr. Henry S. Randolph has written about the history of the Convocation which began in 1943. He describes its purpose and emphases.

For those unaware of the full scope of the work of the Department of Town and Country Church, Dr. H. Conrad Hoyer has written us a succinct interpretation.

Dr. E. W. Mueller reports on his interesting trip to Europe in his article "What Does America Believe?". He comments on the various attitudes found among the Americans, Germans, and Russians towards the individual, the family, and the community. His discussions with youth groups abroad are illuminating, especially on democracy.

We reprint this month an address by the Rev. Dr. Rockwell C. Smith on "People, Land and Churches." The importance of the town and country church in an age where urbanization looms so large is stressed. Dr. Smith is the author of a book entitled *People, Land and Churches,* published by Friendship Press, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, New York.

The Rev. John Peacock, editor of "The Church, Farm and Town" a periodical published in Cowansville, Quebec, is the author of a stimulating article which gives an interesting Christian approach to voting.

Appearing in this issue is a report on the American Country Life Association Annual Meeting in Washington, D. C., July 11-13, 1960 by Miss Betty Jean Patton of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Contributors of articles to Town and Country Church speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

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People, Land and Churches

by Rockwell C. Smith

• When churchmen and women meet in annual assembly, they ought to deal only with matters of central importance to the Christian faith and community. In a day when urbanization is the characteristic process of our culture can we justify the use of the time of so many people in considering the town and country church? I believe not only that we are justified in spending time on this topic but that we as Protestant Christians have a solemn stewardship which God has entrusted to us in town and country America. Any failure on our part to give a good account of this stewardship may well mean a social and cultural collapse affecting all Americans.

People are the first business of the church—who are rural people? In the United States, something over one-third of all Americans are rural: roughly speaking, sixty million people. These are the folk who live in open country or in villages of less than twenty-five hundred persons. If we raise the limit, as many church bodies do, to ten thousand, we have something over seventy million people in the town and country category. In sheer numbers alone the rural population of the United States establishes a constituency we cannot afford to disregard.

These rural people are our people —rural areas are predominantly Protestant: 78 per cent of our rural non-farm people and 83 per cent of our rural farm people declare themselves to be Protestant. These figures are taken from a sample survey of American households by the U.S. Census in March, 1957. The figures given are taken from responses made by Americans in answer to the question: "What is your religion?" Rural Americans claim to belong to us, whatever attitude we may take toward them.

Rural people are a heterogeneous collection of occupations. Farmers once dominated rural life, but do so no longer. Now approximately 12 per cent of Americans are farmers with an additional 24 per cent rural non-farm. But even farmers are not strictly or solely engaged in agriculture. At least a third of farm operators earn more from off-the-farm occupations than they do from their farming. Rural non-farmers include the small town service personnel we are wont to associate with rural life. But they also include such industrial groups as coal miners, section hands on the railroads, oil well workers, fishermen, lumbermen and foresters, and textile mill operatives. Living in town and country America but working in the city are millions of commuters. Each little village in the Northeast, South, and Middle West now has its several carloads of workers who drive every day to nearby cities for jobs. And rural life, population-wise, is capped by the aged—almost double the proportion sixty-five and over in village America as in our whole population. The heterogeneity we once associated with the city has now spilled over into the countryside.

These rural people generally speaking have a poorer standard of living than city Americans. Urban citizens profit by the special services available when a large number of people live in close proximity. They have the advantages of excellent schools, modern hospitals and clinics, specialized professional personnel, and cultural activities. Rural people have to pay more for less effective services. And their actual cash income compared to urban incomes is substantially lower. They have less money to purchase the more expensive services they need.

Yet on these people we all depend for the stewardship of the soil—our most basic and irreplaceable resource. Every moment of every day we are their beneficiaries. At breakfast this morning you ate their food. Before breakfast you donned clothing made from fibres they prepared. The shoes you walk on, the fibres you sit on, the fuel that powers your car as you come to church or that heats and lights the church—all come from rural people. Most of you were born in town and country America, most of you turn to some vacation spot in town and country America for rest and relaxation from the ardors of modern life. Rural people are important to us because there are many of them, because they are Protestant, because they are the basic producers of the raw materials on which we live from day to day.

Land—we have already suggested how important the land is to us. When mineral sources of energy are finally exploited and exhausted, we can still power a great industrial economy from the land. Crops converting solar heat to available energy can then be converted to alcohol and used as fuel. But once lose the soil through careless husbandry and we have lost everything. No matter how competent a nation's industrial know-how, if its land resources have eroded, hunger and cold will make industry manless and impotent.

(Religious News Service Photo)

"It is through the town and country church that we reach out to people and land. They constitute the avenues, the instruments through which the Christian mission comes to focus and power."

Everyone of us has a stake in the land for we all depend upon it. Christians have a particular stake in the land for our Master reminded us that to be His disciples is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

It is this dependence upon the land—a dependence affecting both the secular and the Christian conscience—that offers the ethical justification behind our governmental farm programs. We all want the farmer to secure a good price for his crop, because we want him to be able to pay his high fixed costs of interest and taxes and still have enough left to provide American standard of goods and services to his wife and children. We know that the relationship between supply and demand for farm products is relatively fixed so that a sharp increase in the supply of any crop will be compensated for by a sharp decline in its price. When weather is good and the farmer does an efficient job, our supplies of food and fibre increase substantially beyond the current rate of consumption. Then, if left to themselves on the free market, prices for farm commodities decline drastically. But since the individual farmer must continue to pay his high fixed costs or lose his farm, he raises more and more when, in the interest of higher prices, he ought to curtail his production. In the end he may even farm ruinously in terms of his topsoil just to meet the taxes and interest burden which remain constant in the midst of cascading prices.

Currently our government is trying to mitigate this economic process by controlling production through the Soil Bank, production quotas and the like and by holding prices up to parity or some fraction thereof by crop loans. The result is farmers hampered by controls of one kind and another, an economy burdened by mounting accumulations of stored crops, and consumers paying high prices for food and fibre while they pay high taxes to support the government farm programs. The aim of the program is Christian and right; the method is at once uneconomic in that it requires the ultimate consumer, the citizen, to pay twice for farm supports, and unchristian because it is calculated subsidy of hunger and cold. It is right and Christian that farmers should produce all they can within the framework of soil-conserving agriculture and that food and fibre should be cheap. But it is wrong to expect the working farmer to accept all the burden and cost of such plenty. We must stand with him bearing our share of the costs but we should share these costs not at the point of price in the market but at the point of income on the farm. A straight grant to the working farmer with no strings of any kind attached is more Christian and more economic than what we now do.

But land is more than a production problem. It is a possession to be held under the social arrangement we call property. Christians—urban as well as rural—must answer the questions: How much land should a man own? Is land the kind of property we can trust to corporations? Do we want factories in the fields? Or do we want farmers living on land technically their own but under such lease arrangements with agricultural processors that they no longer have any managerial independence? What is a Christian's duty toward the land he owns when he retires? Has the church any responsibility to help young couples find a foothold on the soil? All of these issues go beyond the old homestead and involve matters of public policy to which the church must speak. What the church must say is for us to find out, to think out.

And so we come—with a basic inevitability—to *churches.* It is through the town and country church that we reach out to people and land. They constitute the avenues, the instruments through which the Christian mission comes to focus and power. What are town and country churches like?

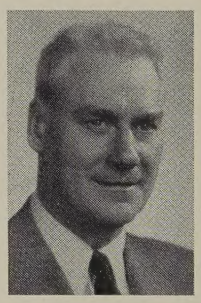
Town and country churches are omnipresent. Go anywhere in town and country America and you will find them. I do not have data for churches generally but The Methodist Church alone has 33,875 churches in American communities of less than ten thousand population. That would mean more than ten churches per county throughout all America if they were spread evenly. And since Methodism constitutes only a small segment of Protestant Christianity, it is clear that there are rural churches everywhere. If we find a village or hamlet without a church, we comment at once upon it. And the frontier settler must be far indeed from neighbors, and living in extreme isolation, to be beyond the ministry of a local church. One of the noblest achievements of American Protestantism has been to make Christian fellowship available locally to town and country Americans.

These are small churches. Again I must use Methodist data. Methodist churches in communities of less than ten thousand average 177 members per church. If we average only those in rural communities, villages of less than twenty-five hundred members, the figure falls to 137. Urban Methodist churches by way of contrast average 656 members. Such small churches can scarcely hope either to pay a minister the salary necessary for subsistence or to provide him with a full-time job. So most town and country churches are linked with other churches in the employment of a pastor or else are served by a minister who supplements the meager salary of the church with other, non-ecclesiastical employment. In either case, the quality of leadership available to town and country churches is affected by limited budgets and divided interests.

And so we find that town and country churches generally are relatively inefficient in the ordinary standards of church success. Studies in Methodism show that town and country churches chosen as effective are below the average for the conferences to which they belong in measures of ecclesiastical efficiency. In membership recruitment and per capita giving they simply do not measure up to the average of the general church in their region. And the more they become like urban churches in organization, the less impact they make upon their own communities, so that they are in constant tension between the drive to be judged effective as a church on the one hand and to serve the community of which they are a part on the other.

All of this suggests some appraisal of the mood of the town and country church. Such appraisal has to be subjective. Many town and country churches are characterized by a sense of inferiority—nothing they do can possibly measure up to the urban standards that set the expectations of churchmanship in our day. And they also exhibit a sense of frustration and consequent recalcitrance and suspicion. It is as if they were saying: "You expect us to do what we cannot possibly do; you are always judging us by standards which are irrelevant to our situation. Then having judged us to be failing, you wish to close us down. You never think of ways in which you could understand and help us."

That leads us naturally to the question: What can we as churchmen do about people, land and churches? We hope to find some good answers soon, but meantime we can insist here that sixty to seventy million people, millions of them unchurched and overwhelmingly Protestant in their loyalties, demand something more and something better than Protestant Christendom has given them yet. Whatever we give them must recognize the profound ethical and spiritual problems posed by the land today, problems which involve us all as consumers on the one hand and as citizens creating and maintaining farm programs on the other. And it must move to them in terms which recognize the kind of a church which dominates rural life. A great renaissance is long overdue in town and country America. It will come when imagination and intelligence are wedded to piety and dedication in town and country service. ■ ■



Rockwell C. Smith

Professor of Rural Church Administration and Sociology, Dean of Students, Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Ill.; A.B. and D.D., DePauw University, S.T.B., Boston University, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin; ordained deacon and elder in The Methodist Church; author of *The Church in Our Town, Rural Church Administration, People, Land and Churches;* director of the annual Interdenominational School for Rural Leaders at Garrett Institute.

A History of the National Convocation

• The Committee on Management discussed the possibilities of holding a national convocation for many moons before it was adopted. There were many obstacles. Wartime economies were against it. Travel had been curbed. But the town and country church movement was bursting with life. It had power and nothing could stop its progress. There was a felt need for a greater interdenominational integrating and unifying force. This was found in the annual national convocation.

The first convocation was held at Columbus, Ohio, in 1943, with a surprising registration of eight hundred pastors and laymen from town and country areas. It has been held annually since then, except in 1945 when it was omitted because of wartime travel restrictions. The convocation has been held in Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, New York, California, Nebraska, Missouri, Oregon, Minnesota, Kansas, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Colorado.

The National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country has been an informal meeting of men and women interested in the town and country church: ministers, administrators, teachers in colleges and seminaries, sociologists, economists, agriculturalists, special parish workers, directors of rural church work, church officers, and other interested laymen. It provides for mutual fellowship and exchange of ideas and practices among town and country leaders and provides an occasion for annual denominational meetings.

The National Convocation has been primarily concerned with town and country church programs and administration, the ministry of the town and country church, minority groups, regional problems, the town and country church's relations to government and other community concerns, and church cooperation. But its commissions have considered also from year to year subjects such as land tenure, migrant workers, financing the rural church, and community organizations and relations. However, the convocation, being sensitive to changes in rural life and to developing needs, has given emphasis to such subjects as radio, television, the non-farm rural areas, the rural-urban fringe, and sparsely populated areas. Emphasis also has been given to seminary and inservice ministerial training, church survey, and rural and village people of other lands.

There does not emerge any noticeable pattern of evolution in terms of change from year to year in the same commission. The convocations often of necessity present some repetitions of subject and treatment. However, it must be borne in mind that a varying group is present each year. Those in attendance who are repeating do have a wide selection of commissions from which to choose.

Most of the commissions were primarily educational groups, in which ideas were presented by a leader or by several leaders, which were followed by discussion. The reports of the commissions are primarily summaries of the leaders' presentations and reports of the discussions. There is evidence in these commissions that the participants share with the group their experiences. The general impression gained from the reports of these commissions is that they were primarily concerned with exchanging experiences and presenting ideas and theories, rather than with coming to a group consensus for the purpose of recommending an action. The ideas and theories presented for discussion revolve around the techniques of program and administration in the rural church.

The National Convocation has been a relatively large gathering ranging in size from 365 to more than 1,000 annually, representing more than a dozen denominations and coming from forty states and Canada, with frequent visitors from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Latin American countries.

The convocation is a vital source of new ideas, new methods, fellowship, and inspiration for town and country churchmen throughout the nation. It has been an energetic thrust of the town and country church. It is one of the most significant single factors in the town and country church movement. One Presbyterian town and country church pastor of distinction, having just attended one of the convocations, said, "This has been the most vital experience of my ministry." ■ ■

THE U.S. CENSUS PROGRAM

• A special issue of *Information Service* of the National Council of Churches, on "Statistical Programs of the U.S. Bureau of the Census," is planned for publication, October 29, 1960. Special attention is given to the 1960 Censuses of Housing and of Population. The new inquiries of the 1960 Census are listed.

A complete list of Census Tract Areas, Standard Metropolitan Areas, Urbanized Areas, is included. A discussion of complete censuses, sample surveys, and estimates is presented.

Various ways Census materials are found useful are enumerated.

The schedule for publication of 1960 Census data is given.

Single copies, pre-publication, if order is received before Oct. 15, 1960, 30 cents each (stamps accepted). Post-publication price 40 cents each (stamps accepted). Rates on quantities, both pre and post-publication, will be quoted promptly. ■ ■

National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country

Theme:
PLANNING FOR MISSION

OCTOBER 18-20, 1960 • DENVER, COLORADO

Headquarters and registration in the First Baptist Church, East 14th and Grand, Denver, Colorado

Sponsored by the Department of Town and Country Church—Division of Home Missions, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.—475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, N. Y.—In cooperation with the Colorado and Denver Area Councils of Churches

PROGRAM

Monday, October 17th

3:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. Registration

Tuesday, October 18th

Morning Session

Presiding, The Rev. Dale W. Medearis—(Disciples of Christ)

8:00 A.M. Registration

9:00 A.M. Worship—Bishop Edwin E. Voigt, The Methodist Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota

9:30 A.M. Opening Statement—The Rev. William Davidson, Chairman of the Program Committee

9:40 A.M. *"Why Do We Plan?"*—The Rev. Dr. Calvin Schnucker, Dean
University of Dubuque, (Theological Seminary), Dubuque, Iowa

10:30 A.M. Recess

10:45 A.M. *"Forces and Factors with Which Planning Must Reckon"*—
The Rev. Dr. H. Conrad Hoyer, Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches

12:00 NOON Lunch

Afternoon Session

Presiding, The Rev. Dr. George Kerr—(United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.)

1:30 P.M. *"Church Planning as a Process"*—The Rev. Dr. Victor Obenhaus, Professor
University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. Discussion Groups
Assignment to discussion groups will be made at the time of registration.
Discussions will focus on the three major addresses of the day.

Evening Session

Presiding, The Rev. Richard K. Smith—(United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.)

7:30 P.M. Panel Discussion—The Rev. Dr. Calvin Schnucker, the Rev. Dr. H. Conrad Hoyer, the Rev. Dr. Victor Obenhaus, the Rev. Shirley Greene, the Rev. Louis Meyers, the Rev. Dr. E. W. Mueller, Miss Cornelia Russell, the Rev. Clifford Samuelson, the Rev. Charles Spivey

Wednesday, October 19th

Morning Session

Presiding, The Rev. W. Francis Allison—(Protestant Episcopal Church)

9:00 A.M. Worship—Bishop Edwin E. Voigt

9:30 A.M. *"Implications of Agricultural Adjustment for the Church's Planning"*—
Mr. William G. Stucky, The Center for Agriculture and Economic Adjustment, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

10:00 A.M. Recess

10:15 A.M. *"Some Examples of Planning"*—A Series of Presentations.
The Rev. William E. Scholes, Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches

12:00 NOON Lunch

Afternoon Session

Presiding, The Rev. Clayton Pepper—(American Baptist Convention)

1:30 P.M. Business Session

2:00 P.M. *"Communicating Planning into Action"*—An illustrated presentation.
Mr. Harold B. Swanson, Professor and Editor, Institute of Agriculture, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Mr. Osgood Magnuson, Executive Director, Minnesota Lutheran Student Foundation, Minneapolis, Minnesota

4:00 P.M. THROUGH EVENING Denominational Group Meetings (to be announced)

Thursday, October 20th

Morning Session

Presiding, The Rev. Serge Hummon—(United Church of Christ)

8:30 A.M. General Assembly

8:45 A.M. *Speakers Review*—Delegates will have an opportunity to raise questions and discuss the Convocation addresses with the program speakers.

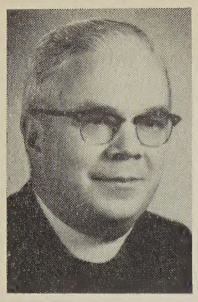
10:30 A.M. Recess

10:45 A.M. *"Seeing Our Mission in a World Perspective"*—The Rev. Dr. Henry S. Randolph, Board of National Missions, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

11:15 A.M. *"Going On from Here—As We Plan for Mission"*—The Rev. Dale W. Medearis, Chairman, Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches

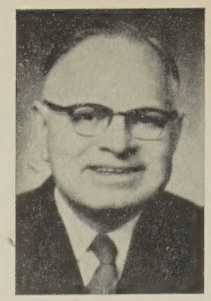
11:40 A.M. Worship—Bishop Edwin E. Voigt

12:00 NOON Adjournment



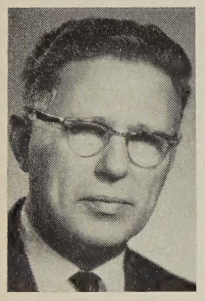
H. Conrad Hoyer

DR. HOYER is associate secretary for the Commission on Cooperative Planning in the Division of Home Missions, NCC. His major responsibility will be directing the development of a process for strengthening denominational efforts to meet the needs of a changing America. He served for 17 years as executive secretary of the Division of American Missions of the National Lutheran Council.



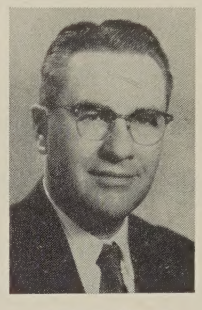
Henry S. Randolph

DR. RANDOLPH is secretary for the Department of Town and Country—Indian Work for the Board of National Missions, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Graduate work at Chicago, Northwestern and Columbia Universities led to B.D., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. Wide experience in problems of rural church life came from teaching and experimental work at the Ashville Farm School.



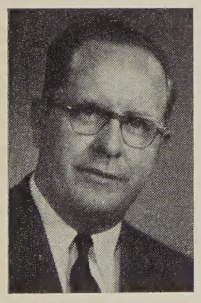
Calvin Schnucker

DR. SCHNUCKER is Dean of the Seminary, chairman of the Division of Applied Theology and professor of Town and Country Work, University of Dubuque, Iowa. He has been a public school administrator and teacher in rural areas, also a pastor of town and country churches. Recently he completed a book on rural church administration.



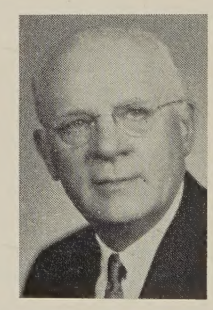
William G. Stucky

MR. STUCKY has been Education Leader at the Center for Agriculture and Economic Adjustment at Iowa State University since 1959. His training includes an M.S. from Cornell and broad experience in agriculture extension service. He was the keynote speaker at a town and country church conference in Kansas earlier this year.



Osgood Magnuson

MR. MAGNUSON is executive director of the Lutheran Student Foundation of Minnesota. He received his B.S. and M.A. from the College of Agriculture, University of Minnesota. He was raised on a farm and served for two years as a County Agricultural Agent. For nine years he was a member of the Minnesota 4-H Club staff.

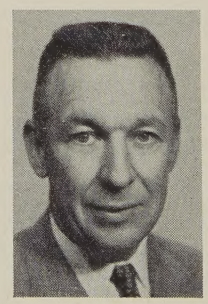


Edwin E. Voigt

BISHOP VOIGT is resident Bishop of the Dakota area of The Methodist Church. His degrees include B.D. and D.D., Garrett Biblical Institute; Ph.D., Yale University; LL.D., Simpson College, Iowa. He was elected a Bishop in 1952. He is the author of *Hebrew for Beginners* and was a contributor to *Abingdon Bible Commentary.*

Victor Obenhaus

DR. OBENHAUS specializes in the field of ethics and society. He received his B.D. from Union Seminary and Ed.D. from Columbia. For 16 years he has been associate professor for the Church in Agricultural and Industrial Life at the University of Chicago and the Theological Seminary. He is author of *The Responsible Christian.*



Harold B. Swanson

MR. SWANSON is editor and professor on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota. In that position he directs the work of the Information Service of the University's Institute of Agriculture. His education includes a B.A. in journalism and an M.S. in agricultural economics, both from the University of Minnesota.

Party Policies and Personalities

• When general elections are in the offing (and they never seem to be very far away) politicians have a way of making their greatest, blandest, and most ingratiating appeals when they are among rural people. Political parties get strong and continuous support from their rural supporters. This is really not because rural people are particularly simple-minded or terribly active in a party way, but more than anything it is because country people normally are sincere and loyal, slow to move but also slow to change, dependable and more moderate and kindly in their opinions of opponents than is often the case in industrial areas.

For this reason they are dangerously open to manipulation by the leaders of political parties and can easily be made victims of a machine that purports to be on their side, or certain personalities who smooth-talk themselves into favor with trusting farmers. This writer has no intention of discrediting any particular party or politician or to influence readers to vote for one or other party (though he very definitely knows how he himself plans to vote, and why!) However there are a few things which all rural people ought seriously to consider in the whole arena of politics.

First of all a warning must be issued against the recent trend to center political action around personalities to the virtual exclusion of platforms. This goes back to the war days when 99 per cent of the population would have voted for Churchill even if he had advocated the closing of all country stores and the opening of a pub in every village. The Germans and Italians even before this were duped into a "follow the leader" national game with dire results. Eisenhower, Diefenbaker, Macmillan, de Gaulle and a dozen other names are only words, but they easily become rallying cries for political action even when nothing more is known about the name than that he is seeking approval for something or other. The cause of any country suffers dangerously when it depends on personalities. What do they stand for? What is their policy? Who controls their actions and decisions? This is the chief point. And it applies equally as significantly with the whole roster of candidates listed on the local polling-booth too.

Since we have a party-system it should be expected that each party have a policy that is totally different from the others. In anything a farmer does there are always several ways of doing it, so it might be expected that a two-party system far from adequately expresses the need of the country. There may be several parties, but they ought to be totally different from one another for honest decision and voting.

Christian action in a political way is based on the free choice of a free people expressed by a free vote (that is, an unbought vote). When voting is based on the number of babies kissed, number of smiles given, number of backs patted, number of hands greased, number of promises made, it is not free and people get what they deserve. But rural people have an ingrained sense of justice, a deep sense of responsibility, a keen sense of neighborliness and democracy, and a great respect for the soil and the proper use of natural resources for the common good as protected in good government. These are the things they want to vote for, and these are the things they should expect to find in a party platform when they support it.

It is the policy that is going to affect the country's good one way or the other. Personalities come and go. Even Churchill was replaced. Voting is praying—the word itself comes from the Latin word for praying—and prayers must be free, honest, sincere and self-sacrificing. Every prayer is answered and every vote expresses an opinion, even when it is on the losing side. The only man who loses his vote is the one who does not vote at all. . . . In this way the farm-vote, even when it is a dwindling part of the total, can still be an effective force for good government and an improving country. ■ ■

An editorial reprinted from *The Church, Farm and Town,* edited by the Rev. John Peacock, Cowansville, Quebec, Canada.

Adjustment Center Studies

Goals and Values in Agricultural Policy

• Most of the readers of the TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are familiar with the "Center for Agricultural and Economic Adjustment" at Iowa State University. They may not be aware that the Center recently sponsored a conference on "Goals and Values in Agricultural Policy."

The Church must take note of a serious inquiry in this direction. Fortunately, representatives of the Town and Country Department were invited to be present at this consultation, and assurance has been given that churchmen will have more opportunity to join with economists, sociologists, and agricultural experts in further exploration of goals and values in continuing studies at the Agricultural Adjustment Center.

At the request of the Committee on Rural Economic and Social Trends (CREST) of the Department of Town and Country Church, the Reverend William Davidson, chairman of the committee addressed a communication to the director of the Center, indicating the churches' continued interest in this kind of inquiry, and expressed the special interest of the Department of Town and Country Church and of its CREST Committee. ■ ■

Red Square, Moscow (LOOK Magazine photo)

To Russians the State Is Everything To Germans the Family Unit Is Supreme . . .

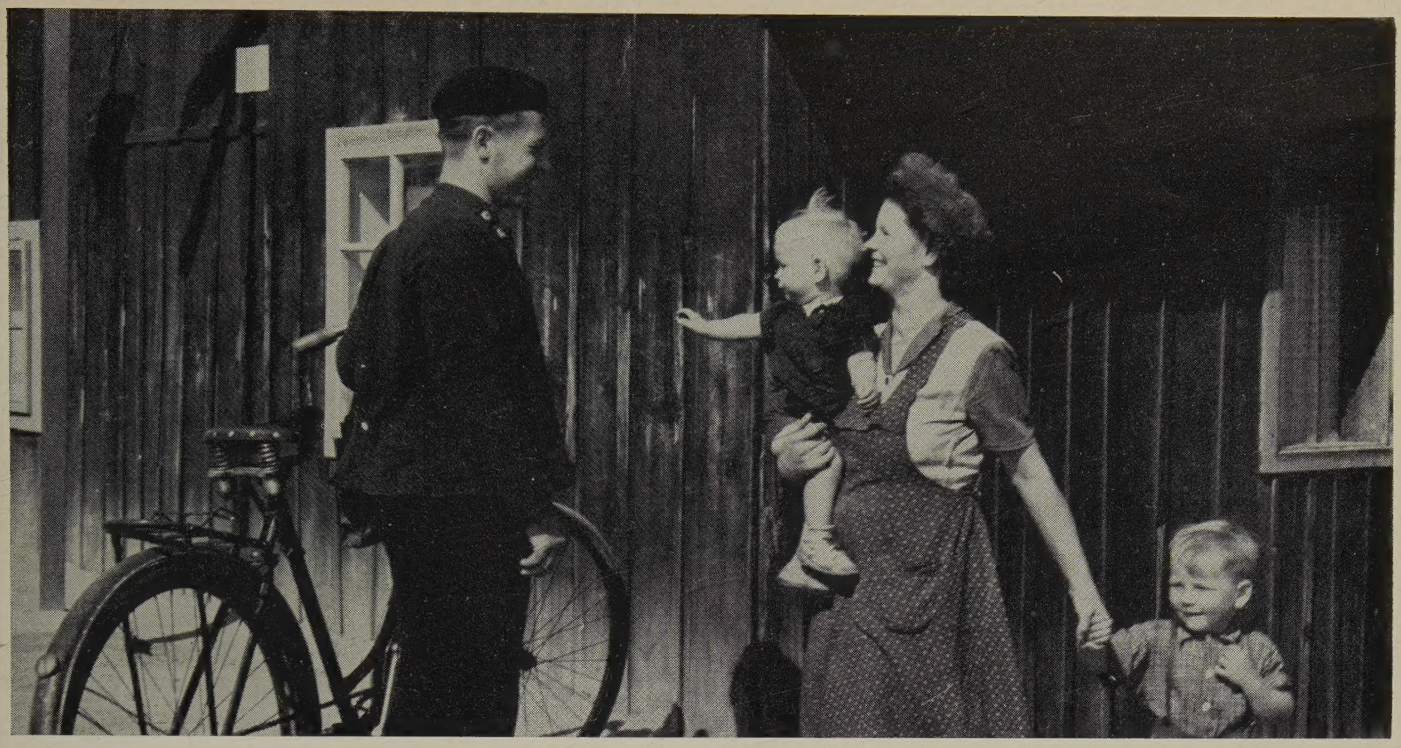
In a gathering of young people from Austria and Bavaria and Wurttenberg, Germany, the informal conversation moved from one subject to another. Young people asked many questions about democracy. I was put on the spot many times. I did not feel it was my role to defend democracy since it needs no defense. I felt it was my role to help the young people understand democracy, and that it and Christianity must not be equated.

I frankly admitted that democracy has many shortcomings. That it is not perfect. It is only as perfect as the people are perfect. The people are the government. Nor can a democratic government be judged according to its efficiency in achieving things, but rather how in the process of achieving its goals the people are developed. When men are free to act they can use that freedom to exploit one another or they can use it to serve one another. If people lack this, democracy will be inadequate in its performance.

This frank admission of the inadequacy of a democratic country resulted in a fifteen minute constructive discussion while I listened in. When the discussion tapered off, I ventured another confession. I said that I felt America in its foreign contacts talked too much about the things we have and not enough about what we believe; that we talked about what our free democratic way and our free enterprise system have given us in the way of things and a high living standard, and not enough about the basic values which we believe. We give the impression that we are more concerned to *have* than to *be*. If "have not" nations will follow our way, given time they can have as much as we have.

This has resulted in a race between the United States and Russia in the area of "having." In private conversation, in public gatherings, in the press and on TV programs in Germany the question is being asked, "Given time will Russia be able to outproduce the USA?" We ought to take the initiative and transfer the race out of the area of "having" into the area of "being." We should talk less about production capacity and production goals and more about what we as a people believe.

Then one of the youth leaders,



A German Family. (United Nations photo)

What Does America Believe?

by E. W. Mueller

seriously but with a tinge of cynicism in his voice, asked, "What does America believe?"

This is the question—What does America believe? I did not let the question go unanswered, but I had to do some quick thinking. There is no official position I could turn to, nor did I feel I could speak for America. Yet, with about forty pairs of eyes looking at me, demanding an answer, I felt I had to give one. I wanted the answer to be honest and helpful to these young people whose nation lacked experience in the democratic way. Every step they take along this way is being taken in the shadow of atheistic materialism in the form of a totalitarian state.

I began slowly and thoughtfully. America is a big country. It is made up of thousands of different communities. I have been in many of them and know the small communities best. They vary greatly. Their citizens come from many different nationalistic backgrounds. I think it is fair to say that what the citizens in the small community (1,000-15,000) believe, is an indication of what America believes. Many of the people in bigger cities still have their roots there. I will tell you what I think the citizens of the small community believe.

First, we believe that the *individual* is important. Each person has worth. This we believe because the individual has been created by God. Furthermore, God considered each person so important that He redeemed him through the life and suffering of His Son.

Secondly, we believe that the *family* is important. It is a basic unit of our society. Again because God established the family.

Thirdly, we believe the *community* is important, be it local, state, national, or world. People need each other and must live with and for each other. This thought is contained in Christ's statement: Love thy neighbor as thyself.

Because all three are important in the eyes of God and in the eyes of man, we are concerned with their development. The individual must have opportunity and encouragement to develop himself as a person. The family is in need of a social and economic climate and atmosphere

that is favorable to wholesome family life. The family must develop a sense of unity having a feeling of security, accept family authority, and yet allow for the individuality of each member.

The individual and the family both need the community if they are to come into their own. They need the community to provide the things the individual and family alone can not provide, for example, education, social orderliness, the church, etc.

It is important that we recognize all three. We must not overemphasize one and neglect the other two. I venture to say that in our early history we overemphasized the individual at the expense of the community. However, of late years the community is coming into importance of its own.

I added that according to my observance in Germany the importance of the family unit was often overstressed to the hurt of the normal future and development of individual members in the family. In Russia the individual and the family are means to an end. They exploited them to increase the achievements of the communal group, or the state. In Russia only the state counts.

The importance of these three and their balanced development is what America believes. Our free enterprise system, our unions, our farm organizations, our natural resources, and our created wealth are means to the end of increasing and furthering normal wholesome development. Our having is a means to our development as individuals, as families, and as communities.

I added that while this is my personal evaluation, I am confident that my fellow citizens will agree with me in principle that this is what America believes.

I will frankly admit that you can point to many news reports which will contradict what I have said. We believe in honesty, but that does not mean there is no dishonesty in the USA. What a nation believes does not mean that the nation has achieved it. What it believes indicates the direction in which a nation is moving.

New generations come and go. Life is a process. We have a concern that in the changing social situation the needs of individuals, the family, and the community are adequately met. We believe that this concern can best be expressed through a free democratic society.

After some discussion of these comments my young German friends accepted them as having merit. Then I ventured to say that young Germany believes this too.

At the young people's colleges which I attended I had much contact with German youth from the small community. In one place I gave a group of forty-nine young people the following assignment: What is the role of a responsible farm village youth in the area of 1) Family life; 2) Church; 3) Recreation; 4) Education; 5) Politics; 6) Farming; 7) Community.

The forty-nine people were divided into seven small discussion groups and each group took one of the subtopics. The results of their discussion indicated to me they believe pretty much the same as we do and want pretty much the same from life as we do. The place where the discussion limped a little was in the matter of understanding the implication of freedom.

What was not always clear was that freedom brings with it responsibility. In a democracy we are quick to demand our rights but reluctant to accept the responsibility that goes with rights. For example, a youth wants the right to drive a car at the age of sixteen but he is not always ready to accept the responsibility that goes with sitting behind the wheel of high-powered cars.

We talked much about our right as American citizens and I now, more than ever before, realize what a valuable thing an American passport is. On the ship I met a young sailor who would give much for the privilege of working in the USA for just one year.

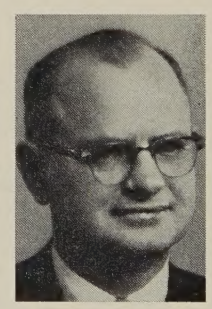
The American has rights of which he must be proud and which he must protect. But do we know the responsibility of being an American citizen. This responsibility, to my mind, begins by thinking through our basic values—the things which give character to our personal and national life. But it must not stop here. We must become articulate in what we believe, so that America will not just be equated with a high standard of living but become known as a land in which we believe in the worth of the individual, wholesome family life and the importance of the community.

The free countries must encourage one another to articulate the nonmaterialistic values of life. Only in this way will the real difference between the free nation and the communistic nation become evident.

The basic difference cannot just be that in the one area people are free and in the other area they are enslaved.

It must become evident that in the free countries people are motivated by basic spiritual values, while in the enslaved countries only material values are being used to motivate the people.

We have a long way to go before this basic difference is readily discerned. The free countries must be more vocal in what they believe. ■



E. W. Mueller

Director for the Church in Town and Country, Division of American Missions, National Lutheran Council; B.D., Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa; D.D., Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Ill.; L.H.D., Wartburg College. Member, NCCC Committee on Management, Town & Country Department, and Committee on Rural Economic and Social Trends (CREST). Secretary-treasurer, American Country Life Assn., and member of Board of Governors for the establishment of an Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Why Have a Town & Country Church Department?

Dr. H. Conrad Hoyer Gives Some Answers

• As the mast head indicates, Town and Country Church is published by the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches. New readers may not know of other services of the Department:

- It coordinates the town and country interests of the denominations related to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
- It studies the town and country situation in the nation as a whole and cooperates in the study of specific areas with a view to suggesting needs and means for more effective Christian witness and service to this segment of America.
- It engages the denominations in the cooperative development of suggested policies and programs for town and country churches in their communities.
- It develops and promotes principles for interchurch relations, in town and country communities.
- It proposes norms and standards for churching town and country communities, encourages expansion in "under-churched" communities, and suggests means for eliminating "over-churching" in communities with too many churches.
- It cooperates with denominations and with the extension departments of colleges and seminaries in developing inservice training for town and country pastors.
- It represents town and country interests in other units of the National Council, and encourages their service in town and country church concerns.
- It works with state and county councils of churches with respect to town and country concerns in their areas.
- It represents the town and country church concerns in relation to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the American Country Life Association, 4-H, farm organizations, etc.
- It developes material for Rural Life Sunday, Harvest Festival, and other rural church observances.
- It arranges the National Town and Country Convocations and assists in planning state and regional conferences and workshops.
- It publishes the Town and Country Church. ■ ■

Keeping Ethically Alert Amid Rapid Rural Change

• "Keeping Abreast of Change" in the Rural Community? Bulletin 215 of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, written by Dr. Phillip F. Aylesworth under that title, provides to the busy reader a brief but accurate aid for doing so.

"Keeping Ethically Alert" to the implications is the responsibility of Christians and Christian churches. A study guide under that title has recently been prepared as a companion to the Department of Agriculture Bulletin. It was written by the Rev. Shirley E. Greene, secretary for Town and Country Church of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and is published by the Department of Town and Country Church of the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches.

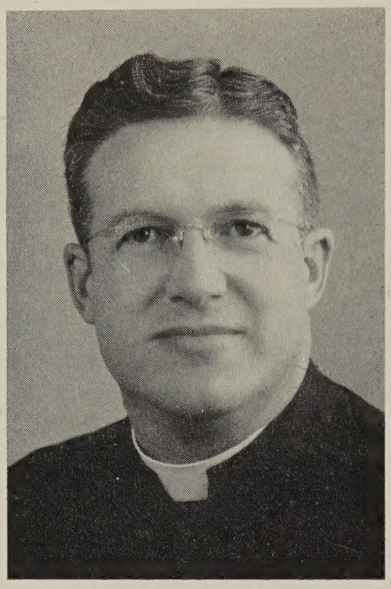
"Keeping Ethically Alert" points to the ethical concerns related to contemporary change and asks probing questions about the changes that are taking place. The Rev. William Davidson, chairman of the CREST Committee, states its purpose in the foreword. He writes:

> "As new values and goals are being sought and established in the culture of this generation, the Christian will do well to consider the relationship they bear to the eternal values for which the church stands. Such study will provide him a basis for determining his individual response, and should put him in a position to participate in bringing Christian influence to bear upon the movements of his day.
>
> "The document which follows [*Keeping Ethically Alert*] is intended as an instrument to promote and assist such a thoughtful approach, especially among rural people, although its wider application is readily apparent. It is designed as a guide for group discussion in local churches and communities as well as for individual study."

Sponsored and published by the Department of Town and Country Church as a study document, "Keeping Ethically Alert" is not to be regarded as an official publication of the National Council of Churches or of the Department of Town and Country Church, nor does it necessarily reflect the views of the denominations affiliated with the Council.

Both pamphlets mentioned in this article are available from the Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches at the New York address. Price of "Keeping Abreast of Change"—10¢; price of "Keeping Ethically Alert"—25¢. ■

so you may know . . .



THE REV. WILLIAM DAVIDSON

• The Rev. William Davidson has been associate secretary in the Division of Town and Country Work of the Episcopal Church's National Council since August 1, 1956.

Mr. Davidson's background is rural and agricultural. He was born in Miles City, Montana, in 1919, and grew up on his family cattle ranch in Eastern Montana. The nearest Episcopal church was eighty miles distant, so Mr. Davidson received his first schooling and religious training at home from his mother, and was later enrolled in the church school by mail.

Mr. Davidson was graduated from Custer County High School and in 1940 received a B.S. degree in Agricultural Education from Montana State College at Bozeman. After teaching Vocational Agriculture in the high school at Sydney, Montana, Mr. Davidson attended the Berkeley Divinity School in New Haven, Conn., and received an S.T.B. degree in 1946.

Immediately after his ordination to the priesthood, Mr. Davidson became priest-in-charge of a mission field 106 miles long, passing over two mountain ranges, and covering three Montana counties. After five years in this field, he became rector of St. James' Church, Lewiston, Montana, resigning that post to assume his present one.

Throughout his ministry, Mr. Davidson has been closely associated with the national program of the Division of Town and Country Work. He participated in several of the national Episcopal conferences and convocations of the Town and Country Church, and was chairman of the Department of Town and Country for his Province. Mr. Davidson is a past president and a member of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Rural Worker's Fellowship.

In addition to being a leader in rural work in the Diocese of Montana, Mr. Davidson was active in many other areas of the Church's work there. In 1940, he was one of ten Episcopal delegates from the United States who participated in the World Conference of Christian Youth in Amsterdam, Holland, and reported on this session to the National Youth Conference of the Church at the Church's General Convention of 1940 in Kansas City, Mo.

He is presently chairman of the Committee on Rural Economic and Social Trends (CREST) of the NCCCUSA's Department of Town & Country and is serving as program chairman of the 1960 Town and Country Convocation. ■ ■

ACLA July Meeting

• The American Country Life Association held its annual meeting in Washington, D. C., July 11-13, 1960. The A.C.L.A. is a voluntary organization composed of individuals and representatives of organizations and agencies who are interested in rural life, both non-farm and farm. Its broad objective has consistently been to encourage and promote satisfying and wholesome rural life.

The speakers at the 1960 meeting focused attention on the rapid changes taking place in our world today and particularly in our own society. Attempts were made to predict what should be taking place in 1965 in rural education, in the rural church, on the farm, in the family, in the community, and the values and beliefs that have been traditionally related to rural living.

Dr. M. J. Taves of the University of Minnesota lectured on the sociological concept of the rural church. He explored ways in which the rural church may increase its potential for contributing to the development of rural life during the next five years. Dr. Taves concluded 1) that the church can provide special spiritual meaning to rural living by capitalizing on its nearness to nature, its slower pace, its opportunities for quiet reflection. 2) The church can be expected to accept responsibility for devising a system of values which give meaning to all activities of rural life. 3) The church needs to permeate the ruralite's entire life, including the codes of his economic behavior. 4) It could contribute significantly to an adjustment of rural-urban differences. 5) The rural church may strengthen personal guidance. 6) It can increase its contribution to the development of rural leadership. ■ ■